

法政大学学術機関リポジトリ  
HOSEI UNIVERSITY REPOSITORY

# The Past is a Different Time Zone: notes on rephotography, place and time

著者	McLEOD Gary
出版者	Department of Global and Interdisciplinary Studies, Hosei University
journal or publication title	GIS journal : the Hosei journal of global and interdisciplinary studies
volume	4
page range	1-20
year	2018-03
URL	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10114/13935">http://hdl.handle.net/10114/13935</a>

# The Past is a Different Time Zone: notes on rephotography, place and time

Gary McLEOD

## Abstract

*Rephotography is a widely practiced method of identifying a location in a previously taken photograph and making a new image from the same vantage point. Although recognized as having value for collecting longitudinal data (Webb, Turner and Boyer 2010, Rieger 2011), for activating memory (Kalin 2013), and for exploring testimony (Miles 2016), there is a tendency for it to be seen as one of photography's many 'photographies', that is, a genre or style within a heterogeneous medium. Building upon ongoing research across fields of study, this research note contributes to a working theory that regards the act of rephotographing as intrinsic to the making of any photograph. Accepting the history of photography as a history of analogy, a means of transferring information from one subject to another (Silverman 2015), the research note considers contemporary rephotography as messy and prone to nostalgia. In then likening the rephotographic act to remediation, a notion of one media adapting another (Bolter and Grusin 2000), the discussion arrives at a need to consider in greater critical depth notions of time beyond that of 'flowing' like a river.*

**Keywords:** rephotography, place, time, analogy, nostalgia

## 1. Starting somewhere

Amongst standard photographic history books, rephotography is only ever briefly described as something appearing first in the 1970s.<sup>1</sup> In a chapter titled 'Changing Realities: Alternative Visions' in his book *Seizing the Light*, Robert Hirsch (2009)

---

<sup>1</sup> In particular, two standard books for studying the history of photography: the revised edition of Naomi Rosenblum's *A World History of Photography* (1989) and the fifth edition of Beaumont Newhall's *The History of Photography* (2009) make no mention at all of rephotography.

introduced five rephotography projects in keeping with a “pessimistic philosophy of diminished possibilities that questioned the foundations of originality and quality” (p.341). These projects resonated with a cultural interest in reconsidering American values, but all took a “different approach to re-entering the past” (ibid, p.359). In particular, for the Rephotographic Survey Project (RSP) conducted between 1977 and 1979 by Mark Klett, Ellen Manchester, JoAnn Verburg, Gordon Bushaw and Rick Dingus, their “method established a dualistic meaning of time and space, putting spectators into a time machine that permits them to glance between then and now.” (ibid, p.359). For Bill Ganzel’s *Dustbowl Descent* (1984), the approach was revisiting (rather than replicating) people and scenes recorded in photographs made for the Farm Security Administration (FSA)<sup>2</sup>, thereby “examining cultural changes and ways in which meaning is transformed by new contexts” (Hirsch, p.360). For Nicholas Nixon’s *Brown Sisters* (2014), it was the serial recording of time seen changing in the yearly group portraits of his wife and her three sisters that elevated “private subjects into symbols of aging and change” (Hirsch, p.360). For Milton Rogovin (1994), the approach was a comparison of a neighborhood in Buffalo, New York made from taking pictures of the same people and places in the 70s, 80s and 90s, which enabled viewers to “compare the photographs to see how the people aged, changed, and endured over time (Hirsch, p.360). For Douglas Levere (2005), the approach was a ‘painstaking’ one of replicating images of New York made by Berenice Abbott in the 1930s, which showed that the “only constant is change itself” (Hirsch, p.360). Such a take on rephotography was brief (and Anglocentric) but still a useful starting point to understand parts of what rephotography involves. Although the word “rephotography” itself was coined by Mark Klett and collaborators during the RSP, these weren’t the first instances of anyone photographing a site more than once, a point which Klett is often quick to point out (Klett et al 2006). As a fuller survey of rephotography-esque projects is forthcoming and has been given in part elsewhere (McLeod et al 2015, McLeod 2016), I

---

<sup>2</sup> This was an undertaking to document and counter rural poverty in America that began in 1935. Two photographers in particular are often discussed in relation to their work for the FSA: Dorothea Lange and Walker Evans, both of whom are part of the canon of photographic history.

shall here concentrate on the motivation for rephotographing. However, this requires understanding of why things might be photographed at all.

## 2. The persistence of place

In his introduction to *Burning with Desire*, Geoffrey Batchen (1999) first drew on an argument put forth by John Tagg, Alan Sekula, Victor Burgin and Abigail Solomon-Godeau that there was no singular photography, only a variety of ‘photographies’. To them, contemporary photography was a vehicle, a means in which to carry the message of other agendas: it was identified with culture. Batchen then drew on an opposing argument pressed by Clement Greenberg, Andre Bazin, John Szarkowski and Peter Galassi, who claimed that photography, through appreciation and use of form, was a pure expression of reality: it was identified with nature. Batchen’s subsequent non-preferential history of photography’s origins led him to conclude that photography was associated both with culture *and* with nature, rejecting neither. Moreover, photography did not appear at the will of its inventors, nor was it always out there; rather it was the result of its own existence.

This line of thinking was continued in the *Miracle of Analogy* (2015), in which Kaja Silverman picked up on an early description of a photographic process whereby “It is not the artist who makes the picture, but the picture which makes itself” (William Henry Fox Talbot in Silverman 2015, p.10). Turning away from viewing early photography as experiments in producing an indexical trace of something that existed, she argued that such experiments were “the world’s primary way of revealing itself to us—of demonstrating that it exists, and that it will forever exceed us” (ibid, p.10). Adopting the term, ‘analogy’, which she took to refer not to sameness but to the similarities that structure *Being* (that which allows us to look at an image and relate to it regardless of where we are and when), she drew on Martin Heidegger to describe how photography has a second power to hold its reading open, helping us to later recognize what we might first miss (ibid, p.11). Critically, analogies are able to contain both a similarity and a difference: if there is little difference between the subject and the photograph which depicts it, we struggle to distinguish it from its referent even though we are aware of its difference; likewise, if there is little similarity, we fail to see that which Maurice Merleau-Ponty described as the *chiasmus*, that thread

which embodies shared experience and links “the toucher to what is touched” (ibid, p.88). With this in mind, a place (whether already photographed or to be photographed) is something looking to be represented in another form: that of an image. This is not to suggest that a place is picking and choosing who photographs it, but that it, as a hybrid formed from a network of associations, has agency. Contrary to an anthropocentric view, agency is regarded here as being able to modify a state of affairs by making a difference, and is thereby extended to things as much as people (Latour 2005).<sup>3</sup> Photographers therefore have little to do with the creation of the light illuminating a place; they just happen to be in the right place and oriented towards such light.<sup>4</sup> In the most well-known cases of photography’s birth, the right place happened to be a common subject that early photographers chose to test their chemical processes on: the view from a window.

### 3. Same place, different time

In 1816, Joseph Nicéphore Niépce (1765–1833) reportedly had a fascination for a particular view from a window in his house. For approximately one month, he had been making images similar to that recognized in the now famous *View from the Window at le Gras* made in 1827, albeit with varied success (Batchen 1999).<sup>5</sup> Even though Nicéphore and his brother Claude “left a number of images that could claim to be their ‘first photographs’” (Batchen 1999, p.120) including portraits, landscapes, religious subjects and genre scenes, it was the process of reproduction that mattered more to them and not the subject matter (ibid, p.121). It was just that Niépce happened to regard views of nature as

---

<sup>3</sup>Although the notion that a place can influence its people may seem far-fetched, there is consensus amongst scholars of Science and Technology Studies that non-human actors can influence human and other non-human actors. This is particularly the case if ‘place’ is seen as a network of associations and not a tangible thing (see Latour 2005).

<sup>4</sup> There are of course photographers manipulating the light and shade of a subject through the use of strobe lights, but crucially for this distinction, they do not make the lights themselves, only operate them.

<sup>5</sup> The fame of this particular image is attributable to historian Helmut Gersheim’s attempts to canonize it. Having sought it out and found it, he was left with the challenge of reproducing it within a history book, which due to its lack of clarity led him to ‘improve’ it by making alterations (see Batchen 1999 and Silverman 2015).

being interesting as well, and the canonical view from the window (the one that survived) thereafter represented a convergence of both interests. That Niépce made multiple attempts allows us to assume the view from the window “became his template of heliography at work, the standard effect by which photography was to be recognized as such” (ibid, p.125).<sup>6</sup>

In England too, repetition was evident when in 1834 and 1835 William Henry Fox Talbot (1800–1877) placed one of his ‘mousetraps’ on a fireplace mantel across the hall from a window at his home Lacock Abbey.<sup>7</sup> The resulting image was said to be the first successful instance of his experiments, attributable partly to his positioning of the camera so that it would remain still enough for the time required for nature to do ‘its work’: in this case produce a view of the window as seen from the fireplace. It is worth noting that Talbot’s canonized image, like Niépce’s window, was one of about six similar exposures of the window made within a five-year period (Batchen 2000 p.7). Larry Schaaf implied that this repetition was due to convenience but Batchen argued that Talbot was interested in the conceptual properties of the window as an image. Assuming both were right, Talbot must have cared for rigor because it would have enabled him to evaluate (and therefore advance) his process. Moreover, as a lover of the arts, he must have been conscious of the potential ‘conversation’ between the window and a reproduction of itself. As Talbot also liked to repeat other subjects (e.g. ferns, lace, shelves), it is quite plausible that he fully understood the procedural *and* conceptual value of recording a view repeatedly.

Around the same time, Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre (1787–1851) was perfecting the chemical process that came to be known as the Daguerreotype, which he described as giving nature “the power to reproduce herself” (Batchen 2000, p.12). In 1838, he made three images of the same street scene in Paris: the first at 8am, the second at about midday, and the third made late in the afternoon (Silverman 2015, p.45). Having also made two other sets of similarly sequenced images, these series “showed that photography was

---

<sup>6</sup> The term ‘heliography’ was Niépce’s. The term ‘photography’ – meaning to draw with light, or, a drawing made by light – is largely attributed to Sir John Herschel in 1839.

<sup>7</sup> Talbot’s small cameras, which he used to expose light-sensitized paper, were nicknamed ‘mousetraps’ by his wife on account of their size and shape.

able to bring the present and the past together in the one viewing experience; that photography could fold time back on itself” (Batchen 1999, p.135). While such images arrested the scene in a way that was previously unheard of, it was certainly something desired within modernity.<sup>8</sup> However, of value here is that the series from his window also represented a revisiting of Niépce’s window, albeit an attempt to repeat the experiment with shorter exposure times (Silverman 2015, p.45). While Daguerre may have been trying to rationalize time – that is to show that it could be paused – a different movement in these images emerges which undermines this intention when seen in sequence because it restores the very continuum that Daguerre wanted to ‘freeze’ (ibid, p.49). This emerging time is an experience after the photograph is made, and thereby differs from the initial experience of time being recorded.

As with the ‘movement’ in Daguerre’s three window views, there were also two kinds of time in Talbot’s windows: time recorded at the moment light made contact with the light-sensitive surface, and time taken for that light to be recognized as a [negative] image. The emergence of the latter was interesting enough for Talbot to note enjoyment from looking at his images gradually appearing (Silverman 2015, p.51). Of this latent image, he noted being able to always see new things within his images as a result. For Silverman, this continual development was also analogy, but one which “connected an image from one moment in time with an image from another” (ibid, p.54). Talbot’s notes suggested such analogies were mental, being of describing sunlight or memories of picturesque things. However, as Talbot’s images were “reversed” (i.e. negative), he had to reverse them again in order for others to recognize them as reality (i.e. positive), thereby also creating analogies in material form. Once stabilized, analogy in Talbot’s window continued to evolve, with prints differing (slightly) from one to the next. While the prints were stabilized and fixed, the images themselves were arguably not.

---

<sup>8</sup> Journalists pointed out to Daguerre that the pausing of motion was the one thing he could not reproduce, at least within a single plate (Batchen 1999, p.135).

#### 4. Back to the start

For Talbot's window, its 'development' continued in the work of other photographers. For instance, Floris Neusüss (b. 1937) visited Lacock Abbey to make pictures directly from the same window. Using the medium of the photogram,<sup>9</sup> he placed light-sensitive paper up against the window itself and left the light to trace its own existence into the paper. In doing so, Neusüss bypassed the purely documentary aspect of picture making (Barnes 2012) and just focused attention on the thing itself. In a similar vein, Hiroshi Sugimoto (b. 1948) made use of some of Talbot's earlier negatives in order to make his own large-format silver-gelatin positive prints. Not only did this show how the original negatives were in fact a reversal of the reality they traced and that resulting positive prints were the "reversal of that reversal", but Sugimoto also noted that the series represented a return journey—a pilgrimage back to the place from which the negatives came (Sugimoto, in Silverman 2015, p.102).

'Pilgrimages' to the studios of Daguerre and Niépce are also common amongst contemporary photographers. One notable example is Daido Moriyama (b. 1938) who in 2008 visited Niépce's studio and made a series of photographs in and around what is now a museum. His resulting photographs were characteristically Moriyama's in the manner in which his work has become reputed, but there was a restrained sense to the images as well, as if he was consumed by awe and unable to 'stamp' his own authority on the place. Indeed, as Moriyama noted, the experience had a profound impact on him,

As I took in the scenery, images of light and shadow from Niépce's iconic photo started overlapping with the actual scenery in front of me, and suddenly I felt as if was looking through Niépce's eyes [...] By standing at the same window as Niépce at his maison workroom in Saint Loup, somewhere in the corners of my mind I felt that my existence as a photographer had been validated (Moriyama 2013, np).

---

<sup>9</sup> A Photogram is a 'contact' type of printing that involves placing an object directly against light-sensitive paper.



This is not unlike Helmut Gersheim's visit to the same courtyard in 1952, which he described as 'unfolding itself' in front of him as he stood at the window. To allude momentarily to science fiction, it is as if the courtyard and the view of it from that window represents a portal in time. Notably, the final image in Moriyama's resulting book *View from the Laboratory* (2013) presented a view of Tokyo from Moriyama's studio reflected in the glass of a framed print of Niépce's window; a telling merging of space and time. Whether that 'pilgrimage' had a lasting impact on Moriyama's work that followed is for further study, but other examples suggest that analogy here extends beyond the medium of photographic film. For instance, in 1995, artist and writer Andreas Müller-Pohle (b. 1951) took the digital file of a scanned image of the *View from the Window at Le Gras* and rendered it in the code of which it was made. Titled *Digital Scores* (1995–1998) and seemingly abstract, Müller-Pohle was making a statement about images as information, although that code used would only ever be a representation of the information (Von Amelunxen 1999).<sup>10</sup> Similarly, *Googlegram: Niépce* (2005) by Joan Fontcuberta (b. 1955) arranged Google images searched for according to the terms "photo" and "foto", and placed them tonally to match those found in a common rendition of Niépce's image.<sup>11</sup> By way of its photomosaic qualities, this rendition promoted totality from a distance but also scrutiny of its parts, which in the case of this image, could leave the viewer lost in search of relevance within a flood of digital images (Silverman 2015, pp.60–65). In a contemporary world where we continue to be flooded with images, it is analogy that provides the conditions for which culture and/or nature transpose themselves. Despite this, human agency is still needed to help further iterations into being.

---

<sup>10</sup> Müller-Pohle's practice is influenced by the writings of philosopher Vilém Flusser who viewed photographs as information (see Flusser 2000).

<sup>11</sup> Fontcuberta deliberately referred to Helmut Gersheim's reproduction of Niépce's image, specifically as it had endured interpretations already (Silverman 2015).

## 5. The contemporary landscape of rephotography

Since Niépce, Talbot and Daguerre made repeated views from/of their windows, the act of repeating any view in photography, whether intentional or not, is commonplace and this is very much reflected in how the word *rephotography* is currently used as shorthand for a collection of other names and descriptors including Repeat Photography (Webb, Turner and Boyer 2010), Fixed Point Observation (Yanai 2017), Photo Point Monitoring (Hall 2002), Re-enactment (Miles 2016), ‘Twin-time Travelling’ (Kanasaka 2014), ‘Ghosting’ (Sorrel 2010, Stone 2014), and ‘Then and Now’ (Klett 2011, Kalin 2013), terms which are often conflated and used interchangeably (Wikipedia 2018).

Etymologically speaking, the prefix falls short also of providing an encompassing definition. The most common form is *re-*: it appears with a transitive verb to indicate that an action applies to the same ‘object’ more than once (e.g. *re-make*); it can imply that change is instigated (e.g. *re-think*); it can appear with an intransitive verb to indicate the return to a previous state (e.g. *re-enter*); moreover, words such as *re-located* indicate that it can describe a change in location or time (Dixon 2014, p.169). Conversely, the less common form is *re*: it appears as an integral part of words such as *register*, *refrain*, *remember*; and it appears in pairs that have different form and meaning such as *recover* – meaning to get back to an original state of health – which differs to *re-cover* – meaning to ‘cover again’ (ibid, pp.21–22).

From these terms, *rephotography* employs the less common *re*, yet it still implies “photographing more than once”, “photographing in a different way”, “photographing as before” and “photographing change”. Elsewhere, *re* implies “anew”, “against”, or the “undoing” of something (Etymonline 2018), thereby suggesting that *rephotography* can mean “photographing the present”, “photographing in reaction to”, or “photographing to understand”. By far the best working definitions of rephotography are as a way of “having a conversation about a place over time” (Klett et al 2006, p.5), or as “an exploratory, process-oriented form of visual communication (McLeod et al 2015, p.52). Taking into consideration Silverman’s view of analogy, rephotography is possibly a way of having a conversation *with* place over time.

While the conception and articulation of rephotography rests upon a number of key practitioners (e.g. Mark Klett, Byron Wolfe, Shimon Attie, Jem Southam, Tyrone Martinsson, Ricard Martinez),<sup>12</sup> who saw value in harnessing the process of looking again (McLeod et al 2015, McLeod 2016), rephotography's visibility within the public sphere largely owes to three technological shifts: the digitizing of archives, the development of web-based technologies and the possibilities offered by social media. The consequence has been an increase of examples of what I would call 'everyday rephotography' by practitioners described elsewhere as amateurs (Keen 2007), prosumers (Toffler 1980), the Net-Generation (Tapscott 1997), the 'creative class' (Florida 2002), or *produsers* (Bruns 2008) to name but a few. However, there are significant concerns when "re-entering the past" on a larger scale.<sup>13</sup>

In his book *The Past is a Foreign Country* (1985), David Lowenthal considered the past as a place that is frequently visited.<sup>14</sup> He pointed out how nostalgia (first thought of as a sickness) along with a yearning to possess the past and a desire to change it had populated literature. Its benefits were that it offered familiarity and therefore comfort, it reaffirmed and validated existence or action, it lent assuredness to our identity in the present, it provided guidance for avoiding others' mistakes, it enriched the present with discoverable details, and could offer escape from current demands. Lowenthal attributed these benefits to antiquity, with its qualities of precedence, remoteness, the primordial and the primitive; to continuity, whereby cumulative creation and accretion provided enrichment; to termination, which lent comprehensibility and accountability to previous actions; and to sequence, whereby order could be assigned and contexts created. Conversely, "re-entering the past" also brought a number of threats and evils. For instance,

---

<sup>12</sup> For these practitioners, rephotography is a fundamental aspect of their practice and not merely an isolated project.

<sup>13</sup> 'Everyday' rephotographing in this instance is distinguishable from professional or academic rephotography projects in that they take form in casual settings, often with only limited awareness of similar projects, or take direct inspiration from a similar project seen online and carried out within the framework of a personal goal.

<sup>14</sup> The title of Lowenthal's book is the opening line from a novel by L.P. Hartley called *The Go-Between* (1953): "The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there." The title of this research note thus implies the relationship between time and space and how it is measured.

favoring the past could diminish the values of the present, or worse, could turn creative people into passive spectators. Referring to Friedrich Nietzsche, passion for the past was a hatred for the present and it should be forgotten, or, worse still, appropriated and supplanted with new significance. Drawing on Paul Valéry, every act of achievement “either repeats or refutes *what someone else has done* – refines or amplifies or simplifies it, or else rebuts, overturns, destroys, and denies it, but thereby assumes it and has invisibly used it.” (Valéry, in Lowenthal 1985, p.70; original emphasis) Everything was indebted in some way to something earlier despite any rejection of it, or even ambivalence about it. Recognition of the past as active in the present is important for taking responsibility for and for navigating the now.

Lowenthal noted that every epoch had endured this dynamic, and it can be argued that contemporary photography is no different. As in literature, rephotography projects frequently court nostalgia. For instance, online articles concerning popular everyday rephotography projects – often in the form of blog posts – tend to overstate the value of seeing change in a single place that is rendered visible by the juxtaposition of two points in time (e.g. Nolan 2013 or Burgett 2014). Nostalgia is a part of rephotography’s collective appeal, but that is to consider rephotography as purely an act of consumerism and overlooks contemporary photography’s capacity for participation (Ewald, Hyde and Lord 2012) and collaboration (Palmer 2017), let alone consideration of photographs as ‘networked images’ (Rubenstein and Sluis 2008). Everyday rephotographers therefore must consider what the photographic medium has become.

## **6. Rephotograph-ing**

Up to now, attention has been given to rephotographs and rephotography as things. However, a vital part of the thinking here rests upon rephotography as an action. In this sense, I follow Jonas Larsen’s observation that studies of photography appear most concerned with products and not enough with the performative aspects of the process (2008, p.143). Thinking that use of digital technology may also help address this overlooks the insufficient analysis when amateurs create photographs (Cobley and Haeffner 2009: 133). It is as an action therefore that rephotography has most value.

Within rephotography as a set of visual practices is an intuitive performative action of re-doing. As explored in Geoff Dyer's *The Ongoing Moment* (2007), all photographers consciously or subconsciously carry around in their minds particular images, which they revisit and re-interpret. The repeated subject by different individuals in different spaces and times represents a constant dialogue between photographers and their images. Dyer acknowledged such a practice as homage but tentatively aligned it also with coincidence (2007, p.115).<sup>15</sup> Arguably for a viewer, the photograph is unique and of value, but for the mature photographer, the process itself can carry as much significance.<sup>16</sup> For me, Dyer's discussion also raises the question of whether a coincidence can be a rephotograph. Moreover, must a rephotograph discard its referent in order to be considered unique? It is questions like these that make a discussion of rephotography more central to the photographic act; intentional or not, every photograph assumes another and invisibly uses it.

In light of new media, this is not unlike what Bolter and Grusin (2000) termed 'remediation', where ideas transcend types of media either by minimizing awareness of the new medium adopted (immediacy) or by heightening awareness of it (hypermediacy). For them, when such remediation occurs within the same medium (in this case photography), the outcome is considered a "special case of remediation" that is commonly appreciated. Such repurposing was indicative of digital media and denies the possibility of uniqueness. The result is a need for emphasis on the strategies by which the remediation takes place.

Within rephotography, this emphasis becomes a matter of thinking about how the previous image (the past) is juxtaposed with the newer one (the present). Most common

---

<sup>15</sup> The full quote is in relation to photographs including hats by Garry Winogrand and Dorothea Lange: "Like all coincidences this one will appear all the more remarkable if we consider some of the myriad conditions and contingencies that led to its occurring. In turn that will raise other questions. How long can a coincidence extend before it ceases to be one? Does coincidence have to be momentary? How long is the moment, the ongoing moment?" (Dyer 2007, p.115).

<sup>16</sup> I use the word "mature" here cautiously, and am aware that a better word may exist. At this time, I mean it to refer to photographers who are thinking about what they do, who have a strong sense of their identity as photographers, who are likely to be never-ending students of the medium as well as its history. This is in contrast with everyday photographers who may well take photographs because they enjoy doing so but cannot yet articulate much more about their practice.

with everyday rephotography is to see pairs of images arranged as ‘Then and Now’, but such thinking implies that rephotographs are later on a timeline than the previously taken photograph, and this presumes that time is tensed, i.e. the present follows a known past that took place and will become part of an undecided future. Many common ‘Then and Now’ examples ask us to look at the changes that have/haven’t occurred over time. We are asked to consider time as a measure of change, but that is just one theory towards time. The Austrian physicist Ernst Mach argued against this noting that “time is an abstraction at which we arrive by means of the changes of things” (1960, p.224). Klett too believes that time “is neither circular nor linear, but a spiral, and change is the measure of time” (Klett, Solnit and Wolfe 2005, p.18) and not the other way around. How the past and present are juxtaposed when rephotographing also presents a problem of metaphors. Many rephotography projects align with metaphors for expressing the passage of time (i.e. duration) as somehow ‘flowing’ like a river in one direction. Again, there are arguments against this (e.g. Horwich, 1987) but those are located mostly in debates within philosophy or theoretical physics, and are unlikely to be had on site when rephotographing a place once. Simply put, these presumptions are not challenged enough when discussing rephotography projects and not challenged at all by everyday rephotographers.<sup>17</sup>

## 7. Concluding thoughts (for now)

Analogy and widespread use of digital cameras have enabled rephotography to become a common occurrence but there remains a lack of criticality. Everyday rephotographers “re-enter the past” regularly but there is a constant danger of suffering nostalgia; of measuring change with time. If rephotography enables a conversation *with* place over time, then there remains a question about when that conversation takes place and how.

---

<sup>17</sup> In fairness to everyday rephotographers whose projects receive attention in online articles, the emphasis on time as a measure of change or consideration of time being like a river is often predetermined by the article authors looking to capture readers. However, in some cases, such as the rephotography of Kiyonori Kanasaka (b. 1947) retracing the travels of Isabella Bird (1831–1904), the metaphor of “time travel” is a deliberate one on the part of the photographer who is himself a geographer.

Bolter and Grusin asserted that new media simply doesn't break away from previous media: new media "instead function in a constant dialectic with earlier media, precisely as each earlier medium functioned when it was introduced" (2000, p. 50). Seen this way, rephotographing is the remediating of photographs. That a rephotograph must follow after a photograph taken earlier (whether explicitly or not) suggests that rephotography is still a tensed activity. However, the process of rephotographing has to ask that previously taken images *co-exist* and have some level of agency in the present at that time (either as prints or on screens) and this is where the familiar metaphor of time flowing like a river could begin to show cracks.

Should we say that the past and the present are in the same boat moving along the river? Perhaps the past is a smaller boat held in the hull of a larger one? Perhaps the past and present are two separate boats moored together as they move along? Perhaps every experienced moment is a singular boat which cumulatively forms a rapidly expanding flotilla moving along the river? Conversely, perhaps the past and present are two vessels in a fixed position and it is the water that moves past them? Or perhaps the present is the only vessel and photographs are just the result of fishing along the way? The variations of such a metaphor are endless and possibly obfuscating, but knowledge and theories about time are presumed and taken for granted in most discussions of rephotography. As a result, we see variations of everyday rephotography where the past is presented in monochrome and the now in color, and whereby images are 'mashed' together according to the creator's personal preference.

While time is debated by theoretical physicists and philosophers as to whether it is a fundamental property of the universe or whether it is just an illusion (e.g. Callender 2010, Unger and Smolin 2014, Rovelli 2016, Buonomano 2017), what is clear from within visual culture as practiced in Western countries is that the metaphor of time behaving like a river continues to 'flow'. Attempts to "re-enter the past" today need to give more concern for this presumption, particularly when "We are tragically inept at receiving messages from our ancestors" (Boorstin, in Lowenthal 1985, p.xvii).

## 8. References:

- Barnes, M. (2012) *Shadow Catchers: Camera-Less Photography*. London: Merrell.
- Batchen, G. (1999) *Burning with Desire: The Conception of Photography*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Batchen, G. (2000) *Each Wild Idea: Writing, Photography, History*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Bolter, J. D. and Grusin, R. (2000) *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Bruns, A. (2008) *Blogs, Wikipedia, Second Life, and Beyond: From Production to Produsage*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Buonomano, D. (2017) *Your Brain is a Time Machine: The Neuroscience and Physics of Time*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Burgett, G. (2014) 'Photographer Turns the Then & Now Trend on Its Head, Holds Up Photos of the 'Future'', PetaPixel [Website]. Available at: <https://petapixel.com/2014/06/30/photographer-turns-now-trend-head-holds-photos-future/> [Accessed 27 January 2018].
- Callender, C. (2010) *Introducing Time: A Graphic Guide*. London: Icon Books.
- Cobley, P. and Haefner, N. (2009) Digital Cameras and Domestic Photography: Communication, Agency and Structure. In, *Visual Communication*, 8(2) pp. 123–146.
- Dixon, R.M.W. (2014) *Making New Words: Morphological Derivation in English*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.



Dyer, G. (2007) *The Ongoing Moment*. New York: Vintage Books.

Etymonline (2018) Entry for 're-' in Online Etymology Dictionary [Website]. Available at: <https://www.etymonline.com/word/re-> [Accessed 27 January 2018].

Ewald, W., Hyde, K. and Lord, L. (2012) *Literacy & Justice Through Photography: A Classroom Guide*. New York and London: Teachers College Press.

Florida, R. (2002) *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Flusser, V. (2000) *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*. Translated from German by A. Matthews. Afterword by H. Von Amelnunxen. London: Reaktion Books.

Ganzel, B. (1984) *Dustbowl Descent*. Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press.

Hall, F. C. (2002) *Photo Point Monitoring Handbook—Part A: Field Procedures; Part B: Concepts and Analysis*. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station (Online). Available at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/treesearch/pubs/3255> [Accessed 27 January 2018].

Hirsch, R. (2009) *Seizing the Light: A Social History of Photography*, Second Edition. New York: McGraw Hill.

Horwich, P. (1987) *Asymmetries in Time*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Kalin, J. (2013) Remembering with Rephotography: A Social Practice for the Inventions of Memories. In, *Visual Communication Quarterly*, 20:3, Taylor and Francis, pp. 168–179.

Kanasaka, K. (2014) *In the Footsteps of Isabella Bird: Adventures in Twin Time Travel*. Tokyo: Heibonsha.

Keen, A. (2007) *The Cult of the Amateur: How Today's Internet is Killing Our Culture*. New York: Doubleday.

Klett, M. (2011) Repeat Photography in Landscape Research. In, Margolis, E. and Pauwels, L. eds. *The Sage Handbook of Visual Research Methods*. London: Sage. pp. 114–131.

Klett, M., Lundgren, M., Fradkin, P.L., Solnit, R. and Breuer, K. (2006) *After the Ruins, 1906 and 2006: Rephotographing the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Klett, M., Manchester, E., Verburg, J., Bushaw, G., Dingus, R. and Berger, P. (1984) *Second View: The Rephotographic Survey Project*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Klett, M., Solnit, R. and Wolfe, B. (2005) *Yosemite in Time: Ice Ages, Tree Clocks, Ghost Rivers*. San Antonio, Texas: Trinity University Press.

Larsen, J. (2008) Practices and Flows of Digital Photography: An Ethnographic Framework. In, *Mobilities*, 3:1, Taylor and Francis. pp. 141–160.

Latour, B. (2005) *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-network-theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Levere, D., Yochelson, B. and Goldberger, P. (2005) *New York Changing: Revisiting Berenice Abbott's New York*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press.

Lowenthal, D. (1985) *The Past is a Foreign Country*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McLeod, G. (2016) *An Unfolding Voyage: Rephotography and the Challenger Expedition*. PhD Thesis, London College of Communication, University of the Arts London.

McLeod, G., Hossler, T., Itälähti, M. and Martinsson, T. (2015) Rephotographic Powers: revisiting rephotography at Photomedia 2014. In *Helsinki Photomedia 2014*, Aalto University Publication Series, pp. 44–83.

Mach, E. E. (1960) *The Science of Mechanics: A Critical and Historical Account of its Development*. La Salle, IL: Open Court.

Miles, M. (2016) Rephotography and the Era of Witness. In, *Photographies*, 9:1, Taylor and Francis, pp.51–69.

Moriyama, D. (2013) *View from the Laboratory*. Tokyo: Kawade Shobo Shinsha.

Newhall, B. (2009) *The History of Photography: from 1839 to the present*, 5th edition. New York: Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Nixon, N. (2014) *The Brown Sisters: Forty Years*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Nolan, S. (2013) ‘A window to Budapest's past: Photographer links 20th century Hungary to the present by turning his camera into a virtual time machine’ in *Daily Mail Online* [Website] 7 June. Available at: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2337329/Photographer-links-Hungarys-past-present-turning-camera-virtual-time-machine.html> [Accessed 27 January 2018].

Palmer, D. (2017) *Photography and Collaboration: From Conceptual Art to Crowdsourcing*. London: Bloomsbury.

Rieger, J. (2011) Rephotography for Documenting Social Change. In, Margolis, E. and Pauwels, L. eds. *The Sage Handbook of Visual Research Methods*. London: Sage. pp. 132–149.

Rogovin, M., Coles, R. Gould, S.J. and Wypijewski, J. (1994) *Triptychs: Buffalo's Lower West Side Revisited*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Rosenblum, N. (1989) *A World History of Photography*, revised edition. New York: Abbeville Press.

Rovelli, C. (2016) *Reality Is Not What It Seems: The Journey to Quantum Gravity*. London: Penguin Random House.

Rubenstein, D. and Sluis, K. (2008) A Life More Photographic. In, *Photographies*, 1:1, Taylor and Francis. pp. 9–28.

Silverman, K. (2015) *The Miracle of Analogy: or The History of Photography, Part 1*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

Sorrel, C. (2010) Gallery of Rephotography Shows WWII in Today's Cities. *Wired.com Gadget Lab* [blog] 30 July. Available at: <https://www.wired.com/2010/07/gallery-of-rephotography-shows-wwii-in-todays-cities/> [Accessed 27 January 2018]

Stone, N. (2014) 'Ghosting Everything'. In *Invisible Works* [website] 23 February. Available at: <http://www.invisibleworks.co.uk/ghosting-everything/> [Accessed 27 January 2018].

Tapscott, D. (2009) *Grown Up Digital: How the Net Generation is Changing your World*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Toffler, A (1980) *The Third Wave*. London: Pan Books.

Unger, R. B. and Smolin, L. (2014) *The Singular Universe and the Reality of Time: A Proposal in Natural Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Von Amelnunxen, H. (1999) 'Digital Scores' in *Andreas Muller-Pohle* [website]. Available at: <http://muellerpohle.net/projects/digital-scores/> [Accessed 27 January 2018].

Webb, R.H., Turner, R.M. and Boyer, D.E. eds. (2010) *Repeat Photography: Methods and Applications in the Natural Sciences*. Washington, DC: Island Press.

Wikipedia (2018) Rephotography [online] Available at: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rephotography> [Accessed 27 January 2018].

Yanai, K. (2017) 'Observation'. Personal website. Available at: <http://abstudio.jp/en/observation/> [Accessed 27 January 2018].